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AGO D/A ltr, 29 Apr 1980

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (9 Jul 68) FOR OT RD 682102

11 July 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 40th  
Signal Battalion, Period Ending 30 April 1968 (U)

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1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 5b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT RD, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

*Kenneth G. Wickham*

KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

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as

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 40TH SIGNAL BATTALION (CONSTRUCTION)  
APO 96491

SCCVUG-PS-C

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 40th Signal Battalion (Construction)  
for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

SEE DISTRIBUTION:

1. Section 1. Operation: Significant Activities.

a. The battalion was organized and located as follows at the end of this period: Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment located at Long Binh; Company A located at Long Binh with one platoon at Can Tho and Vinh Long and one in Saigon; Company B located at Cam Ranh Bay with one platoon at Phu Bai, one at Da Nang and one at Nha Trang; and Company D located at Phu Tai with two platoons at Chu Lai. On 1 April the platoon of Company B located at Phu Bai was attached to the 63d Signal Battalion for operational control. A requirement existed for a construction capability in support of military units in that area. During this reporting period, Company A deployed one platoon to Saigon and portions of another platoon from Can Tho to Vinh Long for cable installation and restoration. The deployment to Vinh Long on 26 April 1968, was for restoration of cable damaged during the TET Offensive. Company B moved one platoon to Da Nang and another to Nha Trang for cable projects in those areas.

b. A portion of the platoon that is in Nha Trang will deploy in May for Sattahip, Thailand to accomplish cable installation projects in that area. This platoon will finish its present job at Nha Trang on or about 1 May 1968, making available the personnel and equipment for the Thailand commitment.

c. In addition, this battalion continues to furnish a twelve man construction and splicing team to the 29th Signal Group in Thailand. This requirement has been in effect since May 1967.

d. A battalion change of command ceremony was held at Long Binh on 5 March 1968.

e. The most significant accomplishments during this period were the completion of several large outside cable plants. The outside plant at Phu Bai consisting of some 100,000 feet of polyethylene cable, both aerial and buried, provided a distribution and trunking system for the Dial Central Office service in that area. Another project completed

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SCCVUG-FS-C

15 May 1968

**SUBJECT:** Operational Report of 40th Signal Battalion (Construction)  
for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RL)

was a trunking cable between the Qui Nhon Dial Central Office and the manual switchboard at Phu Tai. This project consisted of 36,920 feet of cable. Other significant projects of various magnitude were in and around the Saigon/Long Binh area.

f. During the period covered by this report, the battalion was assigned a significant amount of cable restoration missions as a result of the TET Offensive. A total of 16,985 feet of cable has been replaced with an additional 12,000 feet currently being restored.

g. Since arrival in Vietnam, this battalion has installed a total of 2,090,720 feet of multi-pair cable. During the period covered by this report, the battalion installed 393,360 feet of cable.

h. A total of seventeen tasking orders were received during the period and fifteen completed. Major projects are anticipated in Long Binh, Dang Ha, Phu Tai, Tuy Hoa - Phu Kiep, and Sattahip, Thailand.

i. During this period the battalion utilized eighteen platoon days in administrative movements. The rest of the period was largely devoted to accomplishing operational missions and training. Platoon moves were required to accomplish assigned communications tasking orders. Movement of personnel and equipment over short distances by vehicle has not been a problem; however, moves involving the use of sea and air transportation have created difficulties. These difficulties generally involve the availability of transportation and the time utilized for the move. Forty-four percent of available mandays during this period were utilized directly in accomplishing assigned communications tasking orders.

j. Administrative support (rations and quarters) for detached platoons throughout the Republic of Vietnam continues to be provided by other services and other signal battalions. The platoons located at Phu Bai and Chu Lai are partially supported by the Marine Corps, with the platoons at Vinh Long and Da Nang being supported by area signal battalions.

k. The continued dispersal of platoons from the northern part of the Republic of Vietnam to the Delta has caused considerable problems of control, coordination, logistical support and technical assistance. Each location presents different problems that do not pertain to other locations.

l. Since the last reporting period, this battalion received an approved MTOE effective 2 March 1968. This approved MTOE will solve some equipment problems; however, the personnel requested were not approved. Since then, another MTOE has been submitted requesting the required MOS changes the battalion needs to perform its mission in the Republic of Vietnam.

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of 40th Signal Battalion (Construction)  
for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

2. Section 2, Lessons Learned: Commanders Observations, Evaluations, and Recommendations.

a. Personnel

(1) Relief in Critical MOS Shortages

(a) OBSERVATION. Previous ORLL's have pointed out the critical shortage of cable splicers, MOS 36E. An MTOE submission and subsequent approval increased the number of authorized personnel in MOS 36E. However, the battalion has not received the number of personnel authorized by the approved MTOE.

(b) EVALUATION. The ORLL for period ending 31 October 1966 addressed the problem of shortages of 36E personnel authorized by TOE for the mission in Vietnam. The ORLL for period ending 31 July 1967, as well as the ORLL for period ending 31 October 1967, both outlined the requirements for additional 36E personnel and stated that the MTOE should be further revised to solve the problem. Pending MTOE approval, authority was granted to requisition the required cable splicers. Requisitioning of these personnel has continued since June 1967, however, sufficient personnel have not been received. The 1st Signal Brigade in its comments on this battalion's ORLL for the period ending 31 October 1967 stated that commencing July 1967 the Brigade was allocated 100 spaces annually in the Air Force cable splicers course at Keosler Air Force Base, and that the problem of trained personnel should be corrected when graduates of this course begin arriving in country. So far, no graduates of this course have been assigned to this battalion. Seven personnel have been received after training at Sheppard Air Force Base. Two received training during FY 68.

(c) RECOMMENDATION. That emphasis be given to determining where the graduates of the Air Force cable splicers course are going upon completion of the course. Further recommend that this battalion receive these personnel as authorized by the approved MTOE and thereby increase the mission effectiveness of the battalion.

(2) Rotational Hump

(a) OBSERVATION. Reference ORLL's February, May, August, and November 1967. Each headquarters exerted effort throughout calendar year 1967 to reduce this unit's rotational hump which occurs in July and August. During the months covered by this report, assigned strength steadily decreased. Unit experienced a fill rate of 23.7 percent. Of the 135 replacements expected, only 32 were received. Assignment orders were received on 120 personnel that did not arrive.

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(b) EVALUATION. The few replacements received during these months further aggravated the seriousness of the battalion's rotational hump. The expected turnover within the next 3 months is 332 personnel of 579 assigned.

(c) RECOMMENDATION. That the full effect on the requesting unit be evaluated before incoming personnel are diverted to other units.

## b. Operations

### Utilisation of Manpower

(a) OBSERVATION. Management of a construction battalion must be directed toward fulfillment of its primary mission of multi-pair cable. Numerous handicaps to the construction effort in Vietnam have been mentioned in previous ORLL's. These included: delay in receipt of Bill of Materials, lack of engineer support, arrival in-country of the units improperly organized and equipped to perform the mission, personnel not trained in installation of Polyethylene Insulated Conductor cable, lack of spare parts, and deployment of unit with a readiness condition of "Amber" for V-18 ()/ MTQ vehicles, delays due to acquisition of right of way, and a time-consuming process for revision of MTOE's and TDA's.

(b) EVALUATION. The impact of these numerous adverse conditions is that over a ten month period (July 1967 - April 1968), an average of only 45 per cent of available construction personnel mandays were utilized for the construction effort. The cost of maintaining a battalion in RVN amplifies the requirement for expeditious remedial action to realize more efficient and effective utilization of resources.

(c) RECOMMENDATION. That positive, timely action be taken on previous recommendations to supply sufficient spare parts for V-18()/ MTQ vehicles, insure adequate CONUS training of pole lineman in the installation of multi-pair cable techniques, procure and adopt commercial items into the federal stock numbering system and train and assign cable splicers (MOS 36E). The unit has exhausted all reasonable efforts to obtain spare parts; letters requesting assistance for commercial items have been forwarded through channels.

## c. Training

### (1) Training Requirements for MOS 36C and 36E

(a) OBSERVATION. In most instances, an inordinate amount of man-hours are required for training personnel once they arrive in Vietnam.

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(b) EVALUATION. Newly assigned personnel in MOS 36C and 36E are inadequately trained to perform their mission upon arrival in country. New personnel who have recently completed the basic course have little knowledge of construction procedures unique to this area. Very few have ever seen or worked with polyethylene cable. This also holds true for some of the junior NCO's who have recently arrived from Europe, and whose prior service and experience have been in the area of field wire and spiral four construction practices. It has therefore been necessary to provide classroom instruction and formal on-the-job training for these personnel. Planning for full utilization of manpower in conducting this training has caused problems in scheduling courses. This is particularly true with the 36C MOS, where rotational humps make it impossible to continue a normal scheduling of classes on a continuing basis. Last year a large rotation of troops took place in a short span of time, and it appears it will occur again this year. Replacements must be hurriedly dispatched to units to fill the vacancies caused by this large turnover.

(c) RECOMMENDATIONS. That CONUS 36C MOS training be expanded to include more training on the construction practices and techniques of polyethylene insulated conductor cable. That more school trained personnel with MOS 36E be assigned.

### (2) Replacement Training

(a) OBSERVATION. Present local training directives require unit commanders to establish training programs for newly assigned personnel encompassing an initial command information briefing, combat indoctrination and environmental familiarization. Many of these subjects are also included in the normal annual mandatory training requirement.

(b) EVALUATION. A duplication of effort exists in subjects taught in replacement training, then received again for annual mandatory subjects. Replacement training could be standardized at a centralized training location which would provide for a more thorough form of replacement training by having qualified instructors to teach the various subjects required. It would also allow the individual replacement more readily to assume his roll in his unit upon arrival.

(c) RECOMMENDATION. That to the maximum extent possible all training of replacements be conducted prior to their departure from CONUS. Also, that training which must be conducted in country be centralized to insure maximum utilization of resources, and to insure quality and uniform instruction. A recommendation to this effect has been forwarded through channels.

d. Intelligence None.

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### e. Logistics

#### (1) Damage to Multi-pair Telephone cable

(a) **OBSERVATION.** A significant amount (20% - 30%) of multi-pair telephone cable and cable reels are being damaged during shipment. An analysis conducted by this unit revealed that approximately 80 percent of this damage occurs during the off-loading process and handling in temporary storage areas. The remaining 20 percent occurs during in-country shipment and handling. The cube, weight (average 5,000 pounds), and physical shape make transportation and handling difficult. In an effort to reduce damage during in-country shipment, requests are submitted for members of this battalion to be present during the handling process. Accumulative damage renders up to 10 percent of the cable unusable. Wooden reels do not withstand the rigors of handling and climate as well as metal reels. Costs vary upwards to \$4,000.00 per reel.

(b) **EVALUATION.** Damage to cable and cable reels causes considerable delay in completion of construction projects. Additional time and transportation must be utilized to obtain replacement cable. Extra manhours are being devoted to recover usable cable from damaged reels (upwards to 20 manhours per reel). A reduction in damage is necessary to reduce the expenditures of additional funds, labor, and transportation.

(c) **RECOMMENDATION.** That the packaging and handling techniques for multi-pair telephone cable be reviewed with a view toward improving methods of handling and that results be disseminated through logistics and transportation channels. It may be feasible to use a palletized container or to crate in a configuration which will allow easier handling by loading cranes and fork lifts. Until this situation improves, construction personnel should be available to supervise handling of cable reels.

#### (2) Accumulation of Outside Plant Materials

(a) **OBSERVATION.** Since arrival in-country this battalion has completed numerous and extensive outside plant cable projects. Large quantities (612,626 feet) of multi-pair cable and associated hardware have accumulated in the company and battalion storage areas. Much of this material was received without being requisitioned and some after projects were completed. Some cable was received in a damaged condition negating use. On several occasions cable and hardware was issued under incorrect stock numbers or as a result of incorrect markings on the cable reels. As cable is necessarily issued on full reels rather than by footage required, a percentage is excess to the project. Disposition instructions are presently being requested for quantities excess to the

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needs of this unit. Much of the cable is of a different type than presently used. As previous ORLL's have repeatedly stated, the lack of material on site was a serious problem.

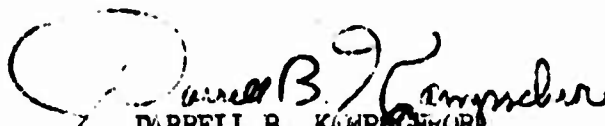
(b) EVALUATION. To provide storage areas for the large quantities accumulated has been a handicap to the units. Covered storage is required for some items and it has been constructed by unit personnel. Units have been reluctant to turn-in material that could possibly be used in the future. Much of the cable received was damaged or on damaged reels and disposition instructions, especially for this type cable, are difficult to obtain. The adoption of new materials which were in short supply and/or not in the supply system further complicated the logistical problem. The resultant "stockpiling" by units did not make up for the slow response or the inadequacies of the supply system.

(c) RECOMMENDATION. That tasking orders specify, when applicable, the quantity and type of material to be left on site at the Dial Central Office for maintenance purposes. That provisions be established for turn in of cable and hardware not needed for completion of projects. That requisitions outstanding at the completion of the project be promptly cancelled and subsequently honored by supply points. Action is being initiated to cancel requisitions still outstanding for completed projects.

(d) Organization None

(e) Other None.

1 Incl  
Organizational Structure

  
DARRELL B. KAMP  
Lieutenant Colonel, SigC  
Commanding

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- 5-CO, 40th Sig Bn (C), APO 96491

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SCCVUG-OP (15 May 68) 1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 40th Signal Battalion (Construction)  
for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

DA, HQ, 160th Signal Group, APO 96491 30 MAY 1968

TO: Commanding General, 1st Signal Brigade (USASTRATCOM), ATTN: SCCVOP,  
APO 96384

1. The following comments apply to information contained in paragraphs as indicated:

a. Paragraph 2a(1) of Section 2. As stated in cited paragraph of the unit's submission, cable splicer personnel (MOS 36E) were first requisitioned in June 1967. The requisition (dated 20 June 1967) contained requirements for 49 EM in grades E4 and E5 with functional training on polyethylene insulated cable. The requisition was resubmitted to 1st Signal Brigade on 5 January 1968. An emergency requisition for 35 personnel in MOS 36E20 was submitted to 1st Signal Brigade 28 May 1968. FY 1969 requirements for cable splicers (MOS 36E) with functional training on polyethylene insulated cable were forwarded to 1st Signal Brigade on 12 January 1968. These requirements included a total of nine personnel in MOS 36E40 and 68 personnel in MOS 36E20. Pending receipt of these personnel, both Group and 1st Signal Brigade have taken aggressive action to minimize the problem. Thus, 36E personnel who have not received functional training on polyethylene insulated cable are required to attend the cable splicers course at the Southeast Asia Signal School (SEASS). Also, pole linemen (MOS 36C) who show potential as cable splicers are sent to the SEASS cable splicer course; a total of 10 personnel have received this cross-training. In view of these and other actions to offset this lack of trained personnel, it is not practicable to initiate the personnel research action recommended in paragraph 2a(1)(c) of Section 2.

b. Paragraph 2a(2) of Section 2. Action taken to date has resulted in a significant improvement in the strength posture of the 40th Signal Battalion. Personnel assigned as of 21 May 1968 totaled 618, with 235 projected losses through 31 July 1968. A one month rotational hump at the present assigned strength would be 93 EM. A 22% loss in July is the only remaining instance in which this battalion's losses will exceed the maximum desired loss rate of 15%. Recent shortages of personnel in the MOS's 36C and 36E precluded total elimination of this hump despite efforts at Group and 1st Signal Brigade. However, validated requisitions have been received for all projected losses. This headquarters has placed particular emphasis on timely and accurate submission of personnel requisitions from all subordinate elements. In addition, all enlisted personnel assignments, of both replacements and inter-Group transfers, are controlled at Group level. This practice has proved to be of great benefit in minimizing rotational humps, and has increased the effectiveness of personnel

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30 MAY 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 40th Signal Battalion (Construction)  
for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

utilization throughout the Command. Based on validated requisitions to date, the strength of the 40th Signal Battalion, as well as the entire Group, is expected to show further improvement throughout the Quarter.

c. Paragraph 2b of Section 2. The effects of these problems on manpower utilization and overall mission accomplishment are fully recognized at this headquarters and at 1st Signal Brigade. Every reasonable effort is being made to overcome the problems at the local level.

(1) With respect to project approval, it must be recognized that the urgency of many requirements in a combat zone does not allow sufficient time for processing and approval of projects before the work must begin. Even after the projects are approved, in many cases it is not possible to obtain the required materials within the desired time frame. However, difficulty has been partially alleviated by 1st Signal Brigade efforts to identify various items by federal stock number and establish a stockage list of materials that are required on a recurring basis.

(2) Of the eighteen authorized V-18 ( )/MTQ vehicles for this unit, seventeen are on hand and one is due in (on requisition). Fifteen of the original eighteen have been replaced with rebuilt vehicles. Three of the original vehicles are still on hand. Only through controlled cannibalization of uneconomically repairable like items in maintenance support facilities is the unit able to get parts for the rugged mechanism of these vehicles.

(3) With respect to the comment regarding the training on polyethylene insulated cable, paragraph 1c above applies.

d. Paragraph 2c(2) of Section 2. This problem was addressed in a letter to 1st Signal Brigade dated 28 March 1968, subject: Mission-Essential Training. That headquarters, in turn, has requested guidance from Headquarters, USASTRATCOM.

e. Paragraph 2e(1) of Section 2. Review and inspection of shipments of multi-pair telephone cable reveal that damage to cable and cable reels is extensive in many cases, thereby causing delays in completion of cable construction projects. Therefore, it is further recommended that the use of "land-sea express" (shipment in the same semi-trailers from manufacturer to in-country destination) be considered for this purpose.

f. Paragraph 2e(2) of Section 2. Turn-in of unused outside plant cable construction materials is recognized as being slow due to the limited amount of space available at consolidated storage sites and problems

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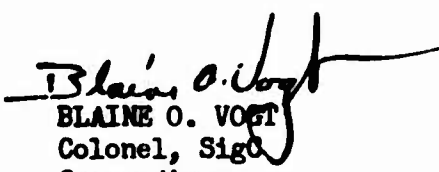
SCCVUG-OP

30 MAY 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 40th Signal Battalion (Construction)  
for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

in identification of these materials. Many of the items are non-standard (commercial) and have not been assigned federal stock numbers. However, every reasonable effort will continue to be made to return unneeded materials to the supply system.

2. Concur in the commander's observations, evaluations, and recommendations, except as modified and amplified above.

  
BLAINE O. VOGT  
Colonel, Signal  
Commanding

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SCCVOP-CR (15 May 68) 2d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 40th Signal Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

DA, HQ, 1st Sig Bde (USASTRATCOM), APO SF 96384, 11 JUN 1968

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHOC-DST,  
APO SF 96375

1. Subject report is forwarded in compliance with USARV Regulation 525-15.

2. Concur in the Commander's observations, evaluations, and recommendations as indorsed with the following comments and/or exceptions:

a. Item: MTOE Problem, 11, p.2. Specific personnel requirements were deleted from the MTOE for the 40th Signal Battalion during processing at Headquarters, USASTRATCOM. This was brought to the attention of Headquarters, USASTRATCOM and was immediately corrected. Personnel were deleted due to an administrative error.

b. Item: Training Requirements for MOS 36C and 36E, 2c(1), p.4. Information available to this headquarters reveals that the only instruction on polyethylene insulated conductor cable is given at Keesler Air Force Base. However, this headquarters is preparing a letter for the Signal School at Fort Gordon informing them of the necessity of this training.

c. Item: Replacement Training, 2c(2), p.5. The mentioned recommendation on replacement training has been received by this headquarters. At the present time a study is being conducted by the 1st Signal Brigade on this subject matter. It is anticipated that this study will be completed by the end of June.

d. Item: Damage to Multipair Telephone Cable, 2e(1), p.6. This headquarters has previously brought this problem to the attention of transportation officials, because most of the damage appears to occur through improper handling of the reels during shipment.

e. Item: Accumulation of Outside Plant Materials, 2e(2), p.6. This headquarters concurs in that section of the recommendation pertaining to the cancellation of requisitions for unneeded material. However, the remaining sections of the recommendation are not considered appropriate for the following reasons:

(1) All subordinate commands have been given instructions on the quantities of Signal construction materials to be kept on hand to maintain installed facilities. Additional instructions are not necessary as a routine item in tasking orders.


SCCVOP-CR (15 May 68)

11 JUN 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 40th Signal Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

(2) Existing supply procedures provide for turn-in of excess material and equipment. These procedures do not exclude Signal construction material, and new procedures need not be established. This headquarters is taking action to have the current excesses returned to the supply system.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

  
FERRELL H. SMITH  
LTC, GS  
Acting Chief of Staff

Copy furnished:

Commanding General, United States Army Strategic Communications Command,  
ATTN: SCCOP, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, 85613.

AVHGC-DST (15 May 68) 3d Ind

CPT Arnold/raf/LBN 4485

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 40th Signal Battalion (Construction) for  
period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)


HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 1 8 1188

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DT  
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned  
for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968 from Headquarters, 40th Sig-  
nal Battalion (Construction).

2. Concur with report as submitted.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

  
**JOHN V. GETCHELL**  
Captain, AGC  
Assistant Adjutant General

Copies furnished:

HQ, 1st Sig Bde (USASTRATCOM)

HQ, 40th Sig Bn (USASTRATCOM)



GPOP-DT (15 May 68) 4th Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 40th Sig Bn (Const) for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 24 JUN 1968

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the  
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorse-  
ments and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

  
C.L. SHORTT  
CPT, AGC  
Asst AG

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Organic Assigned Units

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 40th Signal Battalion (Construction).  
Company A, 40th Signal Battalion (Construction).  
Company B, 40th Signal Battalion (Construction), (Less one platoon under  
operational control 63d Signal Battalion).  
Company D, 40th Signal Battalion (Construction).

Units Attached for Rations and Quarters

446th Signal Detachment

Units Supported for Rations

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 160th Signal Group  
Southeast Asia Signal School

## DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R &amp; D

(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)

1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author) <b>OACSPOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310</b>		2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION <b>For Official Use Only</b>	
		2b. GROUP Cancellation date cannot be determined at this date	
3. REPORT TITLE <b>Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters 40th Signal Bn</b>			
4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates) <b>Experiences of unit engaged in counterinsurgency operations. 1 Feb - 30 Apr 1968</b>			
5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name) <b>CO, 40th Signal Battalion</b>			
6. REPORT DATE <b>15 May 1968</b>		7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES <b>16</b>	7b. NO. OF REFS
8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.		8b. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) <b>682102</b>	
a. PROJECT NO. <b>N/A</b>		8c. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)	
c.			
d.			
9. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT			
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES <b>N/A</b>		12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY <b>OACSPOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310</b>	
13. ABSTRACT			